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We are attempting to adjust ourselves to a new phase of life as strange as that which confronted the primitive sea-creatures who first, eons ago, in obedience to some mysterious life urge, climbed out of the good old dense sustaining element of water and found themselves overwhelmed by the immediate necessity of inventing ways of breathing and moving in the dauntingly impalpable, almost metaphysical, spaciousness that we call air...What I mean is this: the movement for the continuance of intellectual life and growth in mature years [adult education] is not a mere development of education, as we thought in the beginning, but an inherent and necessary part of the problem that humanity must solve in order to adapt itself to what is perhaps the greatest change in the conditions of life since the emergency of our remote ancestors from water into air... Our own emergence from the sustaining density of continuous effort enforced by material necessity into the thin new life- element, dangerous and difficult, of free choice as to what we shall do. What else do the free hours brought to mankind by mechanical invention mean but that in many of our waking hours we must stand up to the horrifying responsibility of deciding what we shall do with ourselves? Of course, our nature, being infinitely slow and conservative, a majority of the human beings suddenly flung up by the machine from the ocean of material necessity and stranded on the beach of free choice continue with nervous reflex movements to go on doing in complicated and useless forms what formerly was a condition of survival. The activities that used, of necessity, to take all of everybody's time, but that now, with the aid of the machine, could be dispatched in a mere corner of our twenty-four hours&emdash;how desperately do we complicate them to make them fill as many hours as they were wont to take! The machine makes it possible for a woman to provide her family with good and sufficient food in return for an expenditure of time and effort scarcely a hundredth part of that required from her great-grandmothers. This frightening fact she conceals from herself that she can still escape the judgment-day decision as to what she will do with her time by hiding behind the claim that she, like her great-grandmothers, is still comfortably shackled with the good old chains of material necessity... Who of us has not known [those who make claims about material necessity] as shields between [themselves] and the bright perilous face of leisure... [and shields against] the bottomless emptiness of lives from which the pressure of daily manual work has been removed without being replaced by freely chosen activities on the higher plane of intellectual, or esthetic, or socially useful effort? In my opinion much of the frantic modern misery and nervous self- torture come from the panic-struck, "gone" feeling of people who snatch at emotion and excitement to stuff it into the gaping hole left empty in their lives, the hole that can really be filled only, as it always has been, by useful activity. But now&emdash;strange new condition of human life- -much of that useful activity must be voluntary. And those who have not yet learned this new, new art of setting themselves to work are suffering and suffering intensely... The leaders of the adult education movement, ploddingly cutting a path to what they thought was only a new corner of a continent well known to them under the name of education, have been brought to a lookout place from which they have caught their first glimpse of the endless tract that they

are challenged to explore and exploit, and in a wild surmise have begun to understand that what they are facing is a totally new phase of human life, in which education must achieve in fact what has been its true purpose all along&emdash;individual growth in the thin new element of intellectual and artistic activities and of abstract thought. It is not surprising that we babble rather wildly and run to and fro.... Here we stand upon our peak in Darien today, thunderstruck, gazing off into a dangerous world in which there is simply not enough of the old need for physical effort to supply the compulsion to activity that is essential to healthful, happy living. We can not live without putting out our strength against obstacles. Individually and collectively; men have always degenerated and gone to pieces when the old needs for material effort were taken away and no other spurs to activity were substituted for them. Turning a faucet instead of walking half a mile to a river to dip up a pailful of water and carry it back step by step to our homes&emdash;this is the sort of change that has always pushed untrained, uneducated human beings, living mostly on the physical plane, into invalidism, moral and physical. Time after time, some portion of the human race, having worked itself into a situation in which the material obstacles to be overcome were lessened or removed, has failed to perceive the thronging obstacles that beset the inner life, and has gone to pieces, or reverted to old primitive conditions in which men could survive without training. Unless everything really does go to pieces and we start over, all of us must learn to live in a world in which nobody will have to carry in water; in which our struggles must be not physical but intellectual and spiritual. In other words, we have come into a situation in which only trained and educated human beings will be able to live healthful lives... Leisure time as created by civilization has never been anything but an unmixed blessing to human beings that breathe freely on the higher levels of life. Untrained, untaught, undisciplined, uneducated human beings are the ones in peril from the invasion of free hours. So what in the beginning looked to the advocates of adult education like a comparatively simple and very interesting campaign to provide more opportunities for learning along familiar lines to people past school age turns out to be a first step in the exploration of a new dimension...Those of our race who settled the Americas also stepped off into a vast unknown, and we recall with dismay some of the terrific wastage caused by their planless wandering in the wilderness of new continents.... It is now apparent that what is needed is not at all a mere extension to more people of the kind of education that used to be given to boys and girls under twenty-one years of age, but rather nothing less than the development of a method by which persons of all ages can be taught to substitute spontaneous intellectual effort for enforced material effort... The very tools that must be used in the exploration and settling of the new dimension of life into which we have emerged are strange and unfamiliar to us. They disconcert us because they lack the old handle of necessity and compulsion, without which we can scarcely conceive of an intellectual tool... What is needed is a transformation in ourselves, in our way of looking at education and at life and at human nature. With the best will in the world these transformations will come slowly. A period of fumbling, of trial and error, of sticking to the problem though discouragement and failure is necessary...If, acting in his free time on his own accord, a man is to do anything worth while, it will be because he has found some worth-while activity that suits him. For the first time it becomes important to society

to help a man find out what sort of creature he is, rather than to let him be crammed into a mold that crushes and breaks him. The successful development of our only-just-begun science of personal diagnosis [psychology] will not only be of the utmost importance to industry—to the material side of society—but it is bound to be an indispensable part of our present endeavor to substitute spontaneous willing intellectual effort for compulsory physical effort.